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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 7 December 2017

[*on the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) (A/72/456)*]

72/108. Question of the Turks and Caicos Islands

The General Assembly,

Having considered the question of the Turks and Caicos Islands and examined the relevant chapter of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples for 2017,[1]

Taking note of the working paper prepared by the Secretariat on the Turks and Caicos Islands[2] and other relevant information,

Recognizing that all available options for self-determination of the Territory are valid as long as they are in accordance with the freely expressed wishes of the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands and in conformity with the clearly defined principles contained in General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, 1541 (XV) of 15 December 1960 and other resolutions of the Assembly,

Expressing concern that 57 years after the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,[3] there still remain 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories, including the Turks and Caicos Islands,

Conscious of the importance of continuing the effective implementation of the Declaration, taking into account the target set by the United Nations to eradicate colonialism by 2020 and the plans of action for the Second[4] and Third International Decades for the Eradication of Colonialism,

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[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-second Session, Supplement No. 23* (A/72/23), chap. X.
[2] A/AC.109/2017/15.
[3] Resolution 1514 (XV).
[4] A/56/61, annex.

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Recognizing that the specific characteristics and the aspirations of the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands require flexible, practical and innovative approaches to the options for self-determination, without any prejudice to territorial size, geographical location, size of population or natural resources,

Convinced that the wishes and aspirations of the people of the Territory should continue to guide the development of their future political status and that referendums, free and fair elections and other forms of popular consultation play an important role in ascertaining the wishes and aspirations of the people,

Concerned by the use and exploitation of the natural resources of the Non-Self-Governing Territories by the administering Powers for their benefit, by the use of the Territories as tax havens to the detriment of the world economy and by the consequences of any economic activities of the administering Powers that are contrary to the interests of the people of the Territories, as well as to resolution 1514 (XV),

Convinced that any negotiations to determine the status of the Territory must take place with the active involvement and participation of the people of the Territory, under the auspices of the United Nations, on a case-by-case basis, and that the views of the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands in respect of their right to self-determination should be ascertained,

Noting the continued cooperation of the Non-Self-Governing Territories at the local and regional levels, including participation in the work of regional organizations,

Mindful that, in order for the Special Committee to enhance its understanding of the political status of the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands and to fulfil its mandate effectively, it is important for it to be apprised by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as the administering Power and to receive information from other appropriate sources, including the representatives of the Territory, concerning the wishes and aspirations of the people of the Territory,

Aware of the importance both to the Turks and Caicos Islands and to the Special Committee of the participation of elected and appointed representatives of the Turks and Caicos Islands in the work of the Committee,

Recognizing the need for the Special Committee to ensure that the appropriate bodies of the United Nations actively pursue a public awareness campaign aimed at assisting the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands with their inalienable right to self-determination and in gaining a better understanding of the options for self-determination, on a case-by-case basis,

Mindful, in that connection, that the holding of regional seminars in the Caribbean and Pacific regions and at Headquarters, with the active participation of representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, provides a helpful means for the Special Committee to fulfil its mandate and that the regional nature of the seminars, which alternate between the Caribbean and the Pacific, is a crucial element in the context of a United Nations programme for ascertaining the political status of the Territories,

Welcoming the Caribbean regional seminar on the theme "Implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: the future for decolonization in the Non-Self-Governing Territories – what are the prospects?", held by the Special Committee in Kingstown and hosted by the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines from 16 to 18 May 2017, as a significant and forward-looking event, which enabled the participants to assess progress made and address challenges faced in the decolonization process, review the existing working methods of the Committee and renew its commitment to implementing its historic task,

Recognizing the importance of the conclusions and recommendations adopted by the seminar, which are annexed to the report of the Special Committee[5] and which outline the findings of the seminar, including, especially, the way forward for the decolonization process within the context of the proclamation by the General Assembly of the period 2011–2020 as the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism,[6]

Noting with appreciation the contribution to the development of some Territories by the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, in particular the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Food Programme, as well as regional institutions such as the Caribbean Development Bank, the Caribbean Community, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, the Pacific Islands Forum and the agencies of the Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific,

Taking note of the statement made by a representative appointed by the Government of the Turks and Caicos Islands at the Caribbean regional seminar held in Managua from 19 to 21 May 2015,

Taking into account that the Territory last participated in the activities of the Special Committee in 2015, and in this regard stressing the importance of the continued participation of the Territory in order to provide the Committee with up-to-date information regarding the decolonization process,

Recalling the dispatch of the United Nations special mission to the Turks and Caicos Islands in 2006 at the request of the territorial Government and with the concurrence of the administering Power,

Recalling also the decision of the administering Power to suspend parts of the Turks and Caicos Islands Constitution Order 2006 and the subsequent institution of direct rule exercised by the administering Power, taking note of the provision of a new Constitution Order in 2012, as well as the election held in the Territory in 2012, and recalling that the administering Power did not accept the recommendations of the 2014 report of the Constitutional Review Committee,

Recalling further the endorsement by the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community of the report of the Community's fact-finding mission to the Turks and Caicos Islands in 2013, which called for, inter alia, a referendum on self-determination and a mechanism for amending the Constitution,

Recalling that, in March 2014, the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community received an update on the situation in the Turks and Caicos Islands, which they will continue to monitor, and that they expressed their support for the full restoration of democracy in the Territory on terms driven by its people,

Noting the general election which took place in December 2016, and welcoming the election of the first female Premier of the Territory,[7]

1. *Reaffirms* the inalienable right of the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands to self-determination, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;

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[5] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-second Session, Supplement No. 23* (A/72/23).

[6] See resolution 65/119.

[7] See A/AC.109/2017/15, para. 16.

2. *Also reaffirms* that, in the process of decolonization of the Turks and Caicos Islands, there is no alternative to the principle of self-determination, which is also a fundamental human right, as recognized under the relevant human rights conventions;

3. *Further reaffirms* that it is ultimately for the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands to determine freely their future political status in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter, the Declaration and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, and in that connection calls upon the administering Power, in cooperation with the territorial Government and appropriate bodies of the United Nations system, to develop political education programmes for the Territory in order to foster an awareness among the people of their right to self-determination in conformity with the legitimate political status options, based on the principles clearly defined in Assembly resolution 1541 (XV) and other relevant resolutions and decisions;

4. *Reiterates its support* for the full restoration of democracy in the Territory and for the work of the Constitutional Review Committee, and encourages further efforts by the administering Power in this regard;

5. *Takes note* of the positions and repeated calls of the Caribbean Community and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in support of a democratically elected territorial Government and of the full restoration of democracy in the Territory as decided by its people;

6. *Notes* the continuing debate on constitutional reform within the Territory, and stresses the importance of participation by all groups and interested parties in the consultation process;

7. *Stresses* the importance of having in place in the Territory a constitution that reflects the aspirations and wishes of its people, based on the mechanisms for popular consultation;

8. *Requests* the administering Power to assist the Territory by facilitating its work concerning public outreach efforts, consistent with Article 73 *b* of the Charter, and in that regard calls upon the relevant United Nations organizations to provide assistance to the Territory, if requested;

9. *Welcomes* the active participation of the Territory in the work of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean;

10. *Encourages* the Territory to continue to participate in the activities of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, including regional seminars;

11. *Welcomes* the continuing efforts made by the territorial Government addressing the need for attention to be paid to the enhancement of socioeconomic development across the Territory;

12. *Stresses* the importance of the Special Committee being apprised of the views and wishes of the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands and enhancing its understanding of their conditions, including the nature and scope of the existing political and constitutional arrangements between the Turks and Caicos Islands and the administering Power;

13. *Calls upon* the administering Power to participate in and cooperate fully with the work of the Special Committee in order to implement the provisions of Article 73 *e* of the Charter and the Declaration and in order to advise the Committee on the implementation of the provisions under Article 73 *b* of the Charter on efforts

to promote self-government in the Turks and Caicos Islands, and encourages the administering Power to facilitate visiting and special missions to the Territory;

14. *Reaffirms* the responsibility of the administering Power under the Charter to promote the economic and social development and preserve the cultural identity of the Territory, and requests the administering Power to take steps to enlist and make effective use of all possible assistance, on both a bilateral and a multilateral basis, in the strengthening of the economy of the Territory;

15. *Takes into account* the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[5] including the Sustainable Development Goals, stresses the importance of fostering the economic and social sustainable development of the Territory by promoting sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, creating greater opportunities for all, reducing inequalities, raising basic standards of living, fostering equitable social development and inclusion and promoting the integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems that supports, inter alia, economic, social and human development, while facilitating ecosystem conservation, regeneration, restoration and resilience in the face of new and emerging challenges, and strongly urges the administering Power to refrain from undertaking any kind of illicit, harmful and unproductive activities, including the use of the Territory as a tax haven, that are not aligned with the interest of the people of the Territory;

16. *Requests* the Territory and the administering Power to take all measures necessary to protect and conserve the environment of the Territory against any degradation, and once again requests the specialized agencies concerned to monitor environmental conditions in the Territory and to provide assistance to the Territory, consistent with their prevailing rules of procedure;

17. *Requests* the Special Committee to continue to examine the question of the Turks and Caicos Islands and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session and on the implementation of the present resolution.

66th plenary meeting
7 December 2017

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[5] Resolution 70/1.